

SP-R2 Recreation Safety Assessment

October 25, 2002

1.0 Introduction/Background

This study will focus on developing quantitative and qualitative data and conclusions pertaining to recreational public safety and related needs in the Study Area.

2.0 Study Objective

The objective of this study is to identify recreation safety issues and concerns within the Study Area. This study will assess current and historic recreation-related safety incidents and trends, as well as recreation safety-related management policies and procedures. Recreation safety is particularly important to visitors, recreation providers, and managers within the Study Area.

3.0 Relationship to Relicensing/Need for the Study

This study is needed because Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulations require a comprehensive recreation plan. The plan must address significant safety issues and concerns that will be incorporated into the development and operations and maintenance (O&M) programs of the plan. This study addresses Issue Statement R2—adequacy of public safety at the Study Area recreation facilities. It specifically addresses Issues RE 49, 92 and 93.

4.0 Study Area

The Study Area includes Lake Oroville, the lands and waters within and adjacent to (1/4 mile) the FERC project boundary, and adjacent lands, facilities and areas with a clear project nexus. The following developed recreation areas and sites are included:

Campgrounds

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Bidwell Canyon Campground | Floating Campsites |
| Bloomer Cove Boat-In Campsite (BIC) | Lime Saddle Campground |
| Bloomer Knoll BIC | Lime Saddle Group Campground |
| Bloomer Point BIC | Loafer Creek Campground |
| Bloomer Group BIC | Loafer Creek Group Campground |
| Craig Saddle BIC | Loafer Creek Horse Campground |
| Foreman Creek BIC | Oroville Wildlife Area (OWA) (Larkin Road Camping Area) |
| Goat Ranch BIC | North Thermalito Forebay RV “en route” Campground |

Day Use Areas (DUAs)

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Lake Oroville Visitor Center | Saddle Dam DUA |
| Lime Saddle DUA | North Thermalito Forebay DUA |
| Bidwell Canyon DUA | South Thermalito Forebay DUA |
| Loafer Creek DUA | Thermalito Afterbay DUA (off Highway 162) |
| Oroville Dam Overlook Area | Thermalito Afterbay Wilbur Road DUA |
| Spillway DUA | Thermalito Afterbay Larkin Road DUA |
| | Burma Road and Lakeland Boulevard DUA |

Boat Launches

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Lime Saddle Boat Launch Area (BLA) | Foreman Creek Car-Top BLR |
| Loafer Creek BLA | Dark Canyon Car-Top BLR |
| Bidwell Canyon BLA | Stringtown Car-Top BLR |
| Enterprise Boat Launch Ramp (BLR) | Vinton Gulch Car-Top BLR |
| Nelson Bar Car-Top BLR | Thermalito Afterbay (4) |
| South Thermalito Forebay | North Thermalito Forebay |
| Diversion Pool-Burma Road and RR Grade | |

Other Recreational Facilities with Project Nexus

| | |
|---|---|
| Lime Saddle Marina | Bidwell Marina |
| Floating Restrooms | Aquatic Center |
| Brad P. Freeman Trail | Feather River Hatchery |
| Lake Oroville State Recreation Area (LOSRA) Hiking/Equestrian Trail | Clay Pit State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) |
| Diversion Pool | Model Aircraft Flying Area |
| | OWA |
| <u>Dispersed use areas along the upstream and downstream reaches of the Feather River</u> | |

5.0 General Approach

This study will represent a quantitative and qualitative assessment of recreation public safety within the Study Area and development of a set of recommendations to be considered during the relicensing process. It will investigate and analyze recreation public safety issues, incidents, and trends at project recreation facilities and use areas. Tasks included in this study are presented below.

Task 1—Research Boating Safety Issues

This task will research boating issues within the Study Area, including boating accident statistics, boating law enforcement problems, and boating regulations and management. Reservoir depth, safety concerns associated with water releases, other dangerous boating areas, and the adequacy of increased marine patrol will also be studied.

Much of the research for this task will be done as part of SP-R7—Reservoir Boating Survey. Results from SP-R7 that specifically address recreation public safety will be incorporated into this study.

Task 2—Research and Analyze Law Enforcement, Recreation Facility Regulations and Resource Regulation/Protection Issues

This task will research local law enforcement violation issues, facility use issues, and resource regulation and protection issues within the Study Area specific to land-based recreation areas, encompassing recreation facility rules/regulations and violation statistics; recreation facility law enforcement problems; and recreation facility regulations and management. Recreation facility regulations will be obtained from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Current and historical local ordinance violations and enforcement problems at project recreation facilities will be obtained from the Butte County Sheriff’s Office, as well as from DWR and DPR. Recreation facility regulation violations and law enforcement problems will identify the types of violations and yearly incidents at Study Area recreation facilities and surrounding areas. Any additional information regarding regulation violations and law enforcement obtained from the Butte County Sheriff’s Office, DWR, and/or DPR will be summarized. Other issues of concern to the general public will be solicited in SP-R13—Recreation Surveys (visitor conflicts).

Task 3—Research and Analyze Local Health/Injury Issues

This task will research health/injury issues within the Study Area, including recreation facility accidents, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) coverage and response time, proximity to healthcare providers, radio communications, cell phone coverage, and recreation facility policies and procedures regarding health/injury issues. Recreation facility policies and procedures and accident reports will be obtained from DWR and DPR. EMS coverage data and proximity to healthcare providers will be obtained from the local ambulance service and area hospitals/healthcare centers. Accidents and other injuries/illnesses will be categorized and reported by year. Other possible health/injury issues will be identified and discussed as they relate to the Study Area.

Task 4—Research and Analyze Wildland Fire Issues

This task will research wildland fire issues within the Study Area, including historical occurrence of wildland fires, future threats, and evacuation/rescue procedures. The historical occurrence and future threats of wildland fires will be obtained from the United States Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the California Department of Forestry (CDF). Procedures associated with wildland fires will be obtained from USFS, BLM, CDF, DWR, and DPR. All information will be summarized and other possible issues regarding wildland fires will be reported.

Task 5—Develop Recreation Public Safety Action Considerations

This task will summarize the previous four tasks and identify key recreation public safety issues that may need to be specifically addressed in the Study Area management plan. DWR, DPR, and the local sheriff will be consulted to develop a range of potential actions to address key issues. These potential corrective actions should be considered by DWR during the relicensing process.

6.0 Results and Products/Deliverables

Results

The results of this study will provide insight into Study Area recreation safety issues and concerns. Historical and current data regarding boating accidents (SP-R7—Reservoir Boating Survey), recreation facility accidents/incidents, and any other incidents requiring emergency services will be summarized and qualitatively analyzed for trends. Analysis of EMS coverage, radio communications, cell phone coverage, and recreation safety policies and procedures will focus on existing preventative measures and responses to recreation safety incidents. Additionally, a list of potential recreation public safety actions will be developed and should be considered by DWR during the relicensing process in order to ensure a high level of safety among Study Area visitors. Finally, visitor responses to selected survey questions (SP-R7 and SP-R13) will be analyzed to determine if additional recreation safety issues emerge which were not discussed/considered in other areas of the study.

Products/Deliverables

The following product will be developed for this study:

- Draft Final Report

The report will contain an executive summary; an introduction with goals and objectives; methods; results; and a discussion.

7.0 Coordination and Implementation Strategy

Coordination with Other Resource Areas/Studies

This study will require coordination with SP-R7—Reservoir Boating Survey, and SP-R13—Recreation Surveys.

Issues, Concerns, Comments Tracking, and/or Regulatory Compliance Requirements

This study addresses Issue Statement R2—adequacy of public safety at the Study Area recreation facilities. It specifically addresses Issues RE 49, 92 and 93.

8.0 Study Schedule

Data collection: June through August 2002.

Data analysis and report writing: September 2002 through January 2003.

Draft Final Report due: February 2003.